

for we rely heavily on sea transport and lights marking navigational hazards are an important part of our history.



Wyola by Robb Jetty

Geraldton

The WA Museum here features displays on the Dutch wrecks in the area, it has good access and is well worth the visit. The wharves and fishing boat harbour at Geraldton are always an interesting sight. The HMAS *Sydney* memorial on Mount Scott is an evocative reminder of Australia's worst naval loss. It is accessible via a ramp up to the dome and has views over Geraldton to the sea. The metal memorial dome has 645 seagulls representing the 645 lives lost in the battle with the German raider *Kormoran* on November 19, 1941. The Abrolhos Islands, site of the loss of Dutch wrecks *Batavia* and *Zeewijk*, are like many other areas in the north west, yet to be totally opened up to tourism and the disabled.

Shark Bay

The Shark Bay World Heritage Interpretation Centre in Denham is filled with fantastic exhibits and information on the world heritage values of Shark Bay, and also includes much of maritime interest relating to the area's early explorers, wrecks and industries such as pearling. Combined with a trip to Monkey Mia to get up close to the dolphins this makes a memorable visit.

Carnarvon

Carnarvon boasts the longest jetty in the State, and though it is now noted for its fishing and recreational value, it was once a major stop-over for the State Shipping Service. A small museum with easy access is situated at the shore-end of the jetty. Further north, past the Blowholes, at Cape Cuvier, the HMAS *Sydney* monument can be visited though roads and access are bumpy and the cliffs are high.

Broome

Situated in the far north, Broome has many attractive maritime sites. For instance it has a working jetty with excellent fishing opportunities where wheelchair access is reasonable. Broome also boasts a well preserved China Town with relatively good access but with some challenges. The Museum of Broome is also situated in the town. Access to the museum is good but because it is small, is not recommended to large groups.

'Wheeling Around' on boats

Boats always pose a problem as far as wheelchair access is concerned. Moving around in rough seas, ladders, narrow gangways, watertight doors and hatches present difficulties. Space is always a problem on boats. Marine toilet facilities, especially, are rarely able to cope with the needs of those without disabilities let alone those of us with limited movement or those in wheelchairs. Some tour operators have started to address this problem, but they need more encouragement in order to continue and develop their facilities. STS *Leeuwin* for example, has a five-day tour for people with partial disabilities and is able to take people with greater disabilities on one day tours by prior arrangement.

The undersea

Traditionally scuba diving has been off limits to people with disabilities. However this stereotype has been proven incorrect. Since water is a 'gravitation free' medium it requires minimal muscle strength, in comparison to the land. It is only in the last 40 years that fins have become the norm. Before that time there was considerable experimentation with 'hand fins' and it is this area that those managing with lower body disabilities should consider. The underwater environment is extremely conducive to a range of activities that would be impossible for us on land. The Australian Underwater Federation has produced a booklet entitled *Diving for those with Disabilities* and for further information contact local diving shops for leads to the available diving courses. People with disabilities interested in shipwrecks, maritime heritage sites, maritime archaeology, or historic boats and ships can obtain more information on the sites mentioned in this pamphlet from various institutions such as the WA Museum. Books and other pamphlets are available through local libraries or through specialist bookshops such as that at the Museum.

For further information on historic shipwrecks contact the WA Museum Shipwreck Galleries or the WA Heritage Council:
<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/collections/maritime/march/march.asp>
<http://tourism.heritage.wa.gov.au>

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ACCESS TO MARITIME SITES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Introduction

Many people with disabilities have not felt the atmosphere of the many historic maritime sites situated around the WA coast. With the right facilities and information, people in wheelchairs or those walking with disabilities can access museums, historic structures such as jetties and lighthouses, and in some cases, shipwrecks themselves. The main aim of this pamphlet is to alert people with disabilities to the possibilities that exist, this includes wreck sites and sites that can be accessed by boat.

The types of sites

There are six types of sites considered: museums, lighthouses, jetties, ruins, above-water wrecks and submerged wrecks.



Eglington anchor outside Western Australian Museum

The metropolitan area Fremantle

There are many places of maritime interest in Fremantle, which since 1829 has been a focus for shipping. Pamphlets and tours abound, there are museums, wharves, outdoor exhibits and a vast array of heritage sites too many to enumerate here. The

WA Museum Shipwreck Galleries is a good starting point with ACROD parking and easy access through and around exhibits, which include the exciting *Batavia* display. There is also a lift for access to the upstairs galleries. The ‘Anchor Walk’ outside takes us past an array of historical anchors and out onto the working ‘heritage’ in the form of the fishing boat harbour with its restaurants and waterfront. In Bathers Bay lie the remains of the ‘Long Jetty’, which in calm clear conditions can be very interesting snorkel dive. The ‘Whalers Tunnel’ further on has exhibits inside and a smooth path right through to the beach at Bathers Bay. From there the water is only a short distance away. Back through the tunnel under the ‘Round House’, access is available onto the Fremantle’s Victoria Quay and the berth for the STS *Leeuwin*, which even alongside is always a remarkable sight with plenty to see. While on the wharf, cargo boats and naval vessels can be seen at various times throughout the year. The new WA Maritime Museum on Victoria Quay has disabled access and tells the stories of Western Australians and the sea, and has many historic vessels on display including the famous America’s Cup winning yacht *Australia II*.

Port Coogee and Omeo, Woodman Point

The wreck of *Omeo*, a large iron sailing barque, is close to the southern breakwall of the Port Coogee development.



Omeo

Plans are for a wreck reserve for snorkellers and divers and easy land access and interpretation for viewing the wreck. *Omeo* is one of the few visible above-water shipwrecks in the Fremantle/metropolitan area serving as a reminder of the heyday of steam and sail, and South Fremantle’s industrial past. Just north of the northern breakwall are the early wooden wrecks of *James* and *Diana*. The historic Woodman Point lighthouse and lighthouse keepers quarters are on the eastern side of Cockburn Rd just south of Port Coogee, and Woodman Point Quarantine Station and cemetery that operated from 1880-1979 at Woodman Point itself.

SS *Alkimos*

A wreck above water *SS Alkimos*, a former ‘Liberty Ship’, and the last steamer wrecked on this coast, is a historic wreck off Two Rocks, north of Perth. In calm conditions it is a comfortable, short boat trip from Mindarie Keys or Two Rocks. The wreck, which dwarfs the charter boats, is a spectacular ruin and is a very emotive reminder of those earlier days. Rumours abound that the *SS Alkimos* is haunted.

Mandurah Anchor Walk

This ‘anchor walk’ is situated at Robert Point in the Mandurah area. It consists of an array of historical anchors not unlike the Anchor Walk in Fremantle. Additionally, there are plinths with information about the wrecks in the area.

The Rockingham Foreshore

Rockingham was a great timber port. The Rockingham foreshore provides paths and cycle ways which assist the access for people with disabilities to the sights in the area. From its promenade there is a great view to Garden Island naval base and Cockburn Sound. The wreck of *SS Kwinana* lies on the foreshore at Kwinana Beach, north of Rockingham. It is now filled in with concrete and is easy to access. From the wreck there are fine views across the water.

The River

The Swan and Canning Rivers were a historical link between Fremantle, Perth and other areas in the days before road transport. Nowadays the river provides some spectacular sights. For those who love nature itself there are a number of cycle paths around the river winding their way through native vegetation, past water-bird sanctuaries and the like. These are ideal for wheelchair access.

Rottnest Wreck Trail

Rottnest, with its winding paths and roads, has many historical wrecks and buildings along with a wreck trail around the island. Rottnest also has daily ferries that take people to the island and back every day and most of the tour boats can cater for people with disabilities. They also have wheelchair ramps. There are semi-submersible glass-bottom boat tours which visit the reefs of Thomson Bay visiting the wrecks of the iron vessels *Macedon* and *Denton Holme*. The tour takes in the full splendour of the Rottnest aquatic life, but access can be difficult as there are ladders and narrow hatchways to negotiate. *Macedon* was a British-built iron screw steamer of 562–tons which was wrecked in March 1883. It lies near *Denton Holme* in 3-6 metres of water. It is one of the most frequently visited wrecks in the State. *Denton Holme*, a 998–ton iron barque, was wrecked in September 1890 on a voyage from Glasgow to Fremantle. Carrying a cargo of pipes, cement and other materials, it struck a reef adjacent to *Macedon* around midnight. Though not badly damaged, a storm set in and the ship was soon wrecked. One of the great sites on the wreck trail is *Lady*

Elizabeth. The wreck of this iron–framed, wooden–hulled sailing vessel lies partly on a sand bottom in 5 metres of normally calm, clear water. Boats can moor right alongside the wreck, which can be seen clearly from the surface on a good day. Once in the water on snorkel or scuba it is a great sight and it can be a great dive.



Rottnest wreck trail plinth

The regions

Esperance

Esperance has number of jetties and wharves that have reasonable access for the disabled, allowing them to take full advantage of a magnificent seascape and perhaps a bit of fishing. The museum in Esperance has a ramp at the entrance and the displays are easy to get around and look at.

Albany

The WA Museum in Albany has reasonable access in and around the displays. There are also a number of jetties, Whale World and *Cheyne IV* whale chaser on display, the forts’ which protected the port, and many other sights to see, all with reasonable access. As WA’s first colonial settlement and history as a major port, Albany has much historic interest to offer. There are lots of nearby shallow wrecks for divers served by a charter boat. The wreck of the former whaler *Cheyne III* in 20 metres of water off Breaksea Island is a stunning wreck for the advanced diver. It can be rough at the wreck, however, and the tour would have to be carefully planned with your dive instructor and the charter operator.

The Cape Lighthouses

The lighthouses in the south west, especially the Leeuwin lighthouse, are situated in a rugged, inspiring, often wind-blown location that is well worth a visit as part of any tour of the south west. Lighthouses are an important part of our maritime heritage,